771 considered, follows the chronological order used by this power in the beginning. Similarly, the various skies where Faro reigns are invoked according to their role and the aims of the petitioners /177/ who appeal to them in many cases with very long prayers.

In order not to overload this discussion, a very limited number of rites are described below. Among them, an important place is reserved for those concerning the person (see Ch. 3), which relate to birth, circumcision and excision, funeral rites, and the cult of ancestors: For each one of these the respective positions of the elements composing the individuality at different times have been pointed out.

The rites relating to the ordinary which come next, affect the collective life of the family and village. They concern the residences, the crossroads, and the public squares. They have a very definite character of a gathering together and redistribution of individual forces for the good of the community.

The rain rituals, also collective, which involve the Komo and the Kworè, present a typical example of Bambara symbolism.

Finally, the rituals for "the renewal of the year" have still a more general character: they show close ties uniting individual and community to the cosmos (1).

1. The agricultural rites have not been touched upon in this work as they will be the object of a detailed description in: S. de Ganay, Techniques et rites de l'agriculture chez les Bambara (to be published).

In addition, most of the rituals are duplicated by a series of games of a cosmogonic character which relate to the stages of creation and to its past, present, or future states. See p. 54.

I. Rites Concerning the Person

Birth and Name-Giving

844 From the moment of his birth, a newborn is washed with millet 273 beer mixed with water. The beer has a purifying quality and the 271

contact with water which symbolizes "the victory of Faro over Mousso Koroni in the matter of family names" is a prefiguration of name-giving.

As soon as the patriarch hears of the birth, he comes and shakes the family pembele over the child's head, three or four times according to the sex, in order to pass on to him the nyama and the qualities of the deceased person from whom he has inherited the ni and the dya. Then, he brings the family altar kere la boli ni into the house of the woman who has just given birth and places it before him. Crouching upon the ground, with fingers spread over the object, he pronounces the following prayer: "You, boli, make me a chief, so that my family prospers, a child is /178/ born, his soul is entrusted to you; I invoke you, boli, night and day" (1).

1. Boli tigi i ka masaya kanu fe, de wolo la, a ni kalifa be i la, ngo boli su ani kle.

Holding the child on his knees, he places the object on its chest for three consecutive times. Repeating the prayer, he next cuts the throat of a red rooster over the open sac, dips the right index into the blood, and, depending upon whether it is a boy or a girl, makes three or four crosses on the forehead of the newborn who thus becomes the "son of the boli," boli dɛ.

A white sea shell, krokrodya (2), is placed before the newborn

2. Cardita vingens.

and gently moved about to "condense his dya within him." Then it is tied to the child's foot for three or four days according to its sex. At the same time, the mother who is entrusted with the child's dya until the name-giving ritual, adorns herself during the eight days following the birth with a collar (madya, "dya of the person") made from the odoriferous root of the tree bearing the same name. She will wear it until the child takes its first steps so as to protect it and to recall that she herself carried the soul of the newborn.

The name is given on the eighth day by the chief of the Komo. Under the dubale, a tree which shelters the village meetings, the elders assemble around the Komo altars which have been carried to the spot (3). If it is a first son, the father gives one hundred kola nuts,

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consisting of a rectangular pillar
worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ton' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single wall. They set to work and built a wall with only one door, [622] over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved for people from Doukounna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the [273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dilo first (2). Lacking

2. A precautionary measure to
guard against poison.

a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and [37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn, Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should [781] not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his
778 special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

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[184]

family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few [435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dioké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it, [273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family. 431 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one 583 or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every
796 year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
● [273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also

[258]

1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
782

881 302 On the same day the young girls in certain localities have a characteristic ceremony. One of them whitens her face, breast, and back with a mixture of milk and ashes. Thus daubed, she dashes out of the village brandishing the spatula (to-n-gàlama) which is used to stir mush (to) in the pot; her companions follow her, shouting. The band goes around the village four times in this fashion, each time stopping at the crossroads. At these points the girl who is bedaubed throws handfuls of food (1), provided by her companions, to the spirits,

[262] 1. Usually basi (couscous) made with fish.

crying: "Dege dule (2)." Her companions reply: "Naloma (3)."

2. Literally, "thick mush."

3. That is, "fool."

881 527 [273] [576] The eve of the soli (soli-si). During the evening preceding the soli, the families concerned enjoy an ample meal, accompanied by innumerable jugs of beer (dlo) as is the custom at all festivals among the Bambara. This is a time of special merriment, of shining faces and greasy hands, and it is good form for the men and boys to belch noisily, saying repeatedly: "ne ne fa," literally, "I am full," that is, "I am replete." The [301] women wander about the lanes, wrapped in their best skirts, with balls of amber in their hair and small silver or even gold rings in their ears and nostrils and rather heavy bracelets on their [482] arms and ankles. Some carry jars of dlo on their heads, while others carry gourds full of couscous, dege, or hot sauces which are often nauseous with smoked or spoiled fish. After the meal everyone gathers on the public square, forming a wide circle whose center is reserved for the dancers; piles of dried millet [373] stalks are used to make bright fires which illuminate the scene and warm the audience.

881 302 The "boys of the soli" (soli-ma-tye-u), their heads

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-no-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783]

1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691]

2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

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[917]

near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

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796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

243 classification is based on the distinction between the sorghums of ordinary soils and those of inundated soils. The latter are sown in August in nursery beds in fresh non-inundated ground and are transplanted at the end of the rainy season in land exposed by the receding waters. The yields vary from 400 to 1,200 kilograms per hectare.

[252 273] Millet is consumed in the form of flour or is used to make a fermented beverage, dolo, which is something like weak beer.

Wheat is cultivated in the wadies where the water is shallow from November to February. Cultivation is carried out with or without irrigation in seed holes 25 centimeters apart and 4 centimeters deep, where the farmer deposits a pinch of seed (70 kilograms of seeds are necessary per hectare). The harvest is at the end of March at the latest. The average yields are from 1,000 to 1,500 kilograms. The wheats are generally tender and give excellent flours for bread, but this culture is still in the experimental stage.

Rice is cultivated on 80,000 hectares, of which almost half are in the central Delta (Mopti, Macina, Djenné) which constitutes the true rice granary of the territory. Outside of the Delta, the productive regions are: the upper basin of the Niger (Bamako), the lake and post-lake region (from Lake Débo to Ansongo), the region near Guinea (south of Sikasso and Bougouni), and finally 10,000 hectares of irrigated rice of the Niger Office.

Two kinds of rice are cultivated: one, an African rice (Oryza glaberrima) in the Delta, is a floating rice capable of enduring considerable submersion. The other, of Asiatic origin (Oryza saliva [sic]), is cultivated in the upper valley of the Niger and in the valleys of the small water courses. Lastly, a mountain rice which grows on dry ground must be mentioned.

What characterizes native rice culture is the absence of [30] 243 hydraulic control. It is a rice culture of submersion, thus very 312 insecure. Since 1944 attempts have been made to end these processes of "wild" submersion. In the upper valley of the Niger where the plains are insufficiently and tardily submerged, rice is sown at the beginning of the rainy season, and when it attains a growth of 20 to 25 centimeters, the water is sent gradually into the plain. When the rice is mature, the water is drawn off into the river through overflow outlets. In the Delta, where the rise of the Niger is utilized directly, regulating works prevent the flood from

[sic] [should be sativa - Analyst]

765 The great mourning lasts at least three days, and during all this time the people of the village rest (4). From all sides people come

4. For distinguished religious heads (gnéna-n-sonnaba), for example, there are often eight days of rest if the season permits. In the winter this is impossible because there is urgent work.

running in large numbers to be present at the djansa and to keep company with the new head of the family and this is understandable, for however little the family esteems itself, d'lo flows in streams, and [FT3] the Negroes dread neither travel nor the sun when there is the prospect of gorging themselves with millet beer. At the end of the great mourning, the great sanga fo (5), there is a crowd at the home of the family

5. Sanga fo means "to go and give one's condolences to a family on the occasion of a death."

of the deceased, for all the friends are there to pay their respects for the last time to the departed old man and to install his successor. The women grind false-cedar bark, soak it in water, and spread it in the /223/ hut of the deceased. Armed with a broom of dry straw, they sweep from floor to roof, gather the dirt in a worn-out gourd and throw it all onto the da-n-koun (1) of the quarter. To do this they

1. Da-n-koun, corner of land formed by paths that cross, hence outside the village.

form a procession; an old hag marches in front, brandishing the broom, and, half dancing and half walking, they all shout:

"Fari ô, fati doun ka di